

USS Hershel 'Woody' Williams Completes Gulf of Guinea Maritime Security Patrol



The Expeditionary Sea Base USS Hershel "Woody" Williams (ESB 4) sails the Adriatic Sea, Feb. 19. Hershel "Woody" Williams is on a scheduled deployment in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations in support of U.S. national interests and security in Europe and Africa. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Fred Gray IV*

NAVAL STATION ROTA, Spain – The Expeditionary Sea Base USS Hershel "Woody" Williams (ESB 4) arrived at Naval Station Rota, Spain, following a successful maritime security patrol in the Gulf of Guinea on April 18, 2022, said U.S. 6th Fleet Public Affairs.

From March to April, Hershel "Woody" Williams completed

maritime security operations with African partners from Sierra Leone, Cabo Verde and Senegal as well as members of the U.S. Navy, Coast Guard and Marine Corps.

“The men and women that made this possible are a testament to our shared values and commitment to ensuring the safety, security, and freedom of navigation on the waters surrounding the African continent,” said Capt. Michael Concannon, commanding officer, USS Hershel “Woody” Williams.

In March, the joint U.S. and African maritime team interdicted an illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing vessel operating in Sierra Leone’s economic exclusive zone.

In April, as part of the African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership, the joint team, led by Cabo Verde, worked in coordination with the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics, INTERPOL and Cabo Verde’s national Maritime Operations Center to conduct a compliant boarding of a Brazilian-flagged fishing vessel, which led to the seizure of approximately 6,000 kilograms of suspected cocaine with an estimated street value of more than \$350 million.

“I couldn’t be more proud of the professionalism and integration of the U.S. tri-maritime services, partner nations and other supporting organizations during our maritime security operations,” Concannon said. “These maritime security events show the world that our African partners are poised and ready to strike against illicit activity.”

Hershel “Woody” Williams is the first warship permanently assigned to the U.S. Africa Command area of responsibility. The U.S. shares a common interest with African partner nations in ensuring security, safety and freedom of navigation on the waters surrounding the continent, because these waters are critical for Africa’s prosperity and access to global markets.

The ESB ship class is a highly flexible platform that may be

used across a broad range of military operations. Acting as a mobile sea base, they are part of the critical access infrastructure that supports the deployment of forces and supplies to support missions assigned.

For over 70 years, U.S. 6th Fleet forces have forged strategic relationships with our allies and partners and solidified a foundation of shared values, experiences and vision aimed at preserving security and stability.

NGC to Develop Next-Gen Relay Ground Station for NIWC Pacific



A ground crew loads the U.S. Space Force's SBIRS GEO-5 satellite onto a C-5M Super Galaxy aircraft for transport operations at Moffett Federal Airfield, California, on March 17, 2021. *U.S. SPACE FORCE / Walter Talens*

BOULDER, Colo. – Northrop Grumman has been awarded a \$99.6 million contract by U.S. Naval Information Warfare Center Pacific to provide mission-critical capabilities for Relay Ground Station-Asia (RGS-A), the company said April 19.

Northrop Grumman will design, develop, integrate, test and deliver the first of the next-generation relay ground stations to support legacy and future missile-launch and missile-warning detection satellites.

“The advanced technologies we bring to this mission build on our proven capabilities to provide existing and future missile warning systems that help keep our nation and its allies safe,” said Aaron Dann, vice president of strategic force programs at Northrop Grumman. “The model-based open-systems architecture provides the ability to rapidly deploy follow-on RGS systems in future locations around the world.”

The RGS-A award will help address the U.S. Space Force’s mission to revolutionize existing missile warning and missile defense systems with the Future Operationally Resilient Ground Evolution system. A key element of the FORGE architecture includes relay ground stations that support existing and new satellite constellations and the capability to handle changes in bandwidth and resiliency.

NIWC Pacific will develop six antennas for RGS-A to enable the Space Systems Command Next-Generation Space Based Infrared System (SBIRS) Ground System to operate the legacy satellites in geosynchronous orbit. The antennas will be deployed to the island of Guam and remotely monitored and operated from the United States.

Most of the work for the five-year contract will take place at Northrop Grumman’s campus in Boulder, where it just opened a 23,680-square-foot office building. Northrop Grumman has more than 2,200 employees across Colorado supporting key customers including the U.S. Space Force, Air Force, Missile Defense

Agency and the intelligence community.

Navy Proposes Elimination of Snakehead LDUUV program



Cheryl Mierzwa, Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division Newport's technical program manager for the Snakehead Large Displacement Unmanned Undersea Vehicle, christens the underwater vehicle at the Narragansett Bay Test Facility in Newport, Rhode Island, on Feb. 2. *U.S. NAVY*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Even as the U.S. Navy was christening the first prototype of the Snakehead large-diameter unmanned underwater vehicle (LDUUV) in February, planning was underway to cancel the program.

The Navy is proposing in its 2023 budget to eliminate the

Snakehead program, according to the Navy Department's recently released Fiscal 2023 budget highlights book.

The Snakehead is intended to be a major advance in UUVs and designed to be the largest UUV to be deployed on the interfaces of the Navy's attack submarines. It is designed to be autonomous, modular and reconfigurable, equipped with a government-owned architecture. It features innovative hull materials and certified lithium-ion batteries. It is designed to be deployed from a modernized dry-deck shelter.

According to the budget highlights book, the major problem in the program was "Misalignment of Snakehead LDUUV design and procurement efforts with submarine hosting interfaces result[ing] in limited availability of host platforms to conduct Snakehead operations."

The book also said that "cost and schedule delays associated with LDUUV development and Virginia Class SSN [attack submarine] integration prohibited further investment."

The only alternative launch and recover interface for the Snakehead is the Modernized Dry Deck Shelter. The U.S. Special Operations Command in conjunction with the Navy is modernizing three Dry Deck Shelters between 2022 and 2026. They are scheduled to become available for use in 2022, 2023, and 2026, respectively.

Under Phase One of the Snakehead program, only one vehicle was built.

The Navy estimates the cancellation of Phase Two of the program and future Snakehead procurement will save the Navy \$185.9 million in fiscal 2023, resulting in a total savings of \$516.8 million over the Future Years Defense Plan.

The Snakehead Phase One prototype was christened on Feb. 2 at the Narragansett Bay Test Facility in Newport, Rhode Island, by a team from the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division

Newport and the Program Executive Office for Unmanned and Small Combatants.

CNO Visits Bath Iron Works, Meets with Sailors and Maine Congressional Leaders

BATH, Maine – Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday traveled to Bath, Maine on April 18, where he met with congressional leaders from Maine to visit General Dynamics Bath Iron Works, the CNO's public affairs office said.

Gilday met with Sen. Susan Collins and other congressional leaders and together they visited shipyard facilities, toured and met with Sailors aboard the future USS Carl M. Levin (DDG 120).

“The work being done here in Maine is critically important to our Navy,” said Gilday. “The entire workforce of Bath Iron Works is delivering cutting edge capabilities at a critical time for our nation.”

“It was a pleasure to welcome back Adm. Gilday to Bath Iron Works, where he had the opportunity to see firsthand the tremendous skill and dedication of employees who are building the Navy's most capable ships. We also met with the commander of the future USS Carl M. Levin. It is reassuring to know that the brave men and women of the Navy will crew a ship built by the world's best shipbuilders,” said Collins. “Increasing the size of our Navy fleet is imperative to our national security in order to counter the rising aggression by Russia and China. As a senior member of the Defense Appropriations

Subcommittee, I will continue to work to ensure that BIW has the resources it needs to support our Navy.”

During the tour they visited and received updates at the Bath Iron Works outfit facility, post-blast paint shop, and spoke with shipyard workers.

Gilday also met with BIW leaders to include the Interim President Robert Smith. They discussed the importance and challenges of the shipyard, which include material delays and connecting with a younger generation of shipyard workers.

Aboard the Arleigh-Burke guided-missile destroyer, Gilday presented an award to a Sailor and expressed his appreciation to everyone on board.

“Seeing a new warship being built is exciting, but what truly breathes life into a new ship is her crew,” said Gilday. “We are the finest fighting force in the world because of our people. I am confident USS Carl M. Levin Sailors will embrace a warfighting ethos with the integrity and uncompromising dedication that truly embraces their ship’s namesake, who helped ensure our nation’s armed forces remained the best in the world.”

The visit marked CNO’s second trip to Bath Iron Works.

**Abraham Lincoln Carrier
Strike Group Conducts
Exercises with the JMSDF**



Aircraft from Carrier Air Wing 9 and Japan Air Self-Defense Force fly over the Sea of Japan as the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), center, the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Mobile Bay (CG 53), left, JMSDF Kongō-class guided-missile destroyer JS Kongō (DDG 173), right, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Murasame-class destroyer JS Inazuma (DD 105), back left, and the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Spruance (DDG 111) sail in formation during a U.S.-Japan bilateral exercise. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Aleksandr Freutel*

SEA OF JAPAN – The Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group, along with JS Inazuma (DD 105) and JS Kongo (DDG 173), from the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, completed bilateral exercises in the Philippine Sea and East China Sea on April 18, said the strike group's public affairs.

USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), USS Mobile Bay (CG 52) and USS Spruance (DDG 111) of Carrier Strike Group 3 and JS Inazuma (DD 105) and JS Kongo (DDG 173) of JMSDF Escort Division 11 engaged in various joint events to include enhanced maritime communication operations, air warfare training, and various

other drills to hone in on integrated maritime operations and combat readiness.

“Our enduring commitments to our relationships in the Indo-Pacific region continue to grow and blossom through integrated and bilateral at-sea exercises including the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force,” said Rear Adm. J. T. Anderson, commander, CSG 3. “These exercises demonstrate our collective combat-credible capabilities while safeguarding our shared interests and values.”

Coordinated maritime engagements and operations with international partners are part of the U.S. Navy’s routine presence in the Indo-Pacific. Since arriving in the U.S. 7th Fleet region in January, CSG 3 units have participated in multiple operations and exercises to include dual carrier operations with USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70), exercises Noble Fusion and Jungle Warfare 2022 and a long-range air demonstration.

The Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group consists of CSG 3 and includes aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72); Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 9; Destroyer Squadron 21; the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Mobile Bay (CG 53); and the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62), USS Gridley (DDG 101), USS Sampson (DDG 102) and USS Spruance (DDG 111).

Abraham Lincoln’s embarked air wing consists of the “Wallbangers” of Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron (VAW) 117; “Titans” of Fleet Logistics Multi-Mission Squadron (VRM) 30; “Chargers” of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 14; “Tophatters” of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 14; “Black Aces” of VFA 41; “Wizards” of Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 133; “Black Knights” of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 314; “Vigilantes” of VFA 151 and “Raptors” of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 71.

ABECSG departed its homeport for a scheduled deployment to the Indo-Pacific on Jan. 3.

Coast Guard Offloads \$11.7M in Cocaine, Transfers 6 Suspected Smugglers



Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez crewmembers offload six bales of cocaine, weighing approximately 463 pounds, at Coast

Guard Base San Juan April 18, 2022, following the interdiction of a go-fast smuggling vessel near Puerto Rico April 11, 2022.
U.S. COAST GUARD

Puerto Rico – Coast Guard Cutters’ Joseph Tezanos and Heriberto Hernandez crews offloaded approximately 1,289 pounds of cocaine and transferred custody of six suspected smugglers at Coast Guard Base San Juan April 18, following two separate vessel interdictions near Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

These interdictions are the result of multi-agency efforts involving the Caribbean Border Interagency Group and the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force. The seized cocaine has an estimated wholesale value of approximately \$11.7 million.

The most recent interdiction occurred during a routine patrol April 11, 2022, after the crew of a Customs and Border Protection multi-role enforcement aircraft sighted a suspect vessel in waters northwest of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. Coast Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan diverted the cutter Heriberto Hernandez that arrived on scene and interdicted a 25-foot go-fast vessel. The vessel was carrying four men – Dominican Republic nationals – and six bales of suspected contraband, which tested positive for cocaine. The cutter crew apprehended the suspects and seized the contraband.

During a routine patrol April 6, 2022, the crew of a Customs and Border Protection multi-role enforcement aircraft sighted a suspect vessel north of San Juan, Puerto Rico. Coast Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan diverted the cutter Joseph Tezanos that arrived on scene and interdicted a 30-foot go-fast vessel. The vessel was carrying three men – Dominican Republic nationals – and eight bales of suspected contraband, which tested positive for cocaine. The cutter crew apprehended the suspects and seized the contraband. One suspected smuggler from this group, who required medical care ashore, was medically evacuated Thursday to a hospital in Puerto Rico.

“Safeguarding the nation’s southernmost maritime border is among our top priorities,” said Capt. Gregory H. Magee, Coast Guard Sector San Juan commander. “You can expect to see many more of these interdictions from the Coast Guard and from our local and federal partners as we work together to stop drug smuggling go-fast vessels from making landfall in the Puerto Rico or the U.S. Virgin Islands.”

Special Agents supporting the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force received custody of the detainees and the seized contraband, and they are leading the investigation into this case. The apprehended smugglers are facing federal prosecution in Puerto Rico on criminal charges of Conspiracy to Import Controlled Substance and Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance Aboard a Vessel Subject to the Jurisdiction of the United States. The charges carry a minimum sentence of 10 years imprisonment and a maximum sentence of imprisonment for life.

Cutters Heriberto Hernandez and Joseph Tezanos are 154-foot fast response cutters homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

USS The Sullivans Returns Home After Back-to-Back Deployments



The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS The Sullivans (DDG 68) pulls into port in Copenhagen, Denmark, March 21, 2022. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Mark Klimenko*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS The Sullivans (DDG 68) returned to Naval Station Mayport after a three-month deployment to the European theater of operations on April 18, said U.S. 2nd Fleet Public Affairs.

This surge deployment follows a 2021 deployment with the Royal Navy's HMS Queen Elizabeth Strike Group (CSG-21), from which The Sullivans returned home just before Thanksgiving.

The Sullivans was in sustainment when it departed Naval Station Mayport in January 2022. Ships in the sustainment phase of the Optimized Fleet Response Plan remain ready for contingency tasking before entering a maintenance phase.

“Despite the dynamic schedule and demanding operational tasking, The Sullivans crew displayed resiliency, grit and

determined self-sufficiency to accomplish all missions,” said Cmdr. James Diefenderfer, Jr., commanding officer of The Sullivans. “We are incredibly proud of our team’s accomplishments.”

The crew navigated over 20,000 nautical miles, operating in the Irish, North and Baltic Seas, and conducted 12 sea and anchor details, 11 underway replenishments, and port visits to Copenhagen, Denmark; Rotterdam, The Netherlands; Ponta Delgada, Portugal; and Rota, Spain.

While deployed, The Sullivans participated in NATO Exercise Dynamic Guard 2022 in the North Sea. Dynamic Guard, hosted by Norway, is a biannual, multinational electronic warfare exercise series designed to provide tactical training for the NATO Response Force and NATO national units. For the first time in three years, two U.S. vessels participated to further enhance the ongoing cooperation, strength and interoperability between NATO Allies.

The Sullivans continued operations with three NATO countries within Standing NATO Maritime Group (SNMG) 1, which was comprised of the German navy Type 702 Berlin-class replenishment ship FGS Berlin (A1411), the Royal Netherlands Navy Karel Doorman-class multi-purpose frigate HNLMS Van Amstel (F831) and the Royal Danish Navy Iver Huitfeldt-class frigate HDMS Peter Willemoes (F362).

During the ship’s 2021 deployment, the crew operated with the Royal Danish Navy Absalon-class frigate HDMS Esbern Snare (F342) in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations. Almost a year later, Esbern Snare escorted The Sullivans through the Danish Strait, demonstrating expert seamanship, navigation and cooperation through one of the busiest waterways in the world.

“While we take time to recover and spend well deserved time at home, we are focusing our efforts on ensuring The Sullivans can continue to operate at peak performance for years to

come,” said Diefenderfer. “Our immediate mission is the expert execution of our maintenance availability and continued training to prepare the ship and crew for future tasking. I know this crew will be ready for whatever comes next – we stick together.”

USS Mitscher Returns to Norfolk After Surge Deployment



A Sailor assigned to the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Mitscher (DDG 57) embraces his wife after the

ship's return to homeport, Naval Station Norfolk, April 16.
U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Ryan Seelbach

NORFOLK, Va. – Nearly 300 Sailors arrived home to Naval Station Norfolk aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Mitscher (DDG 57) on April 16 following a surge deployment to the European theater of operations, said the ship's public affairs.

Mitscher rapidly deployed in January to join the Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group (HSTCSG) in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations.

This was the ship's second homecoming in several months. Mitscher returned from an extended nine-month deployment with the Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group in September 2021.

While deployed, the ship conducted presence operations and defense of the HSTCSG with the Greek, Italian, Norwegian and Turkish navies.

"No nation can confront today's challenges alone," said Cmdr. Thomas McCandless, commanding officer of Mitscher. "A more resilient and rapidly innovating Navy, combined with a robust set of allies and partners, demonstrate NATO's commitment to a free and open global commons. I can say without a doubt that our crew rose to the task. With a 10-day notice, Mitscher was able to onload ammunition and deploy with ease."

The crew enjoyed one port visit to Aksaz, Turkey, where they toured several historical sites and experienced local hospitality.

"We arrived in theater and seamlessly integrated with forces who were already on station," said McCandless. "Mitscher did indeed 'seize the day.'"

U.S., Iceland Wrap Up Exercise Northern Viking 2022



From left to right, the Norwegian Fridtjof Nansen-class frigate HNoMS Thor Heyerdahl (F314), French F70 type frigate FS Latouche-Tréville (D646) and German Sachsen-class air-defense frigate FGS Sachsen (F219) sail in formation in the North Atlantic Ocean in support of exercise Northern Viking 22. *FRENCH NAVY*

ICELAND – At sea, French, German and Norwegian surface combatants were joined by American and German maritime patrol aircraft in a hunt for adversary submarines while small boats conducted visit, board, search and seizure missions on suspect vessels.

On land, near Keflavík Air Base, an Icelandic coast guard rescue helicopter transported trapped and injured citizens to a temporary medical facility staffed by members of 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit's Shock Trauma Platoon and host nation medical personnel for triage and treatment.

For the last two weeks, allied nations have exercised these capabilities and more, coming together to hone their skills and enhance cooperation during the Iceland-hosted, U.S. 6th Fleet-executed exercise Northern Viking 22, U.S. 6th Fleet Public Affairs said April 16.

"Northern Viking 22 has been incredibly successful for us and for the participating Allies," said Cmdr. Marvin Ingólfsson, Deputy Commander of Keflavík Air Base. "We have learned from each other these last two weeks and we have shared tactics and procedures, improving our ability to operate together in the defense of Iceland and of the lines of communication that run through this area."

The exercise, which began April 2 and concluded April 14, initially focused on protecting the critical infrastructure of Keflavík Air Base. Exercise participants established temporary secondary refueling positions for Allied aircraft while working to neutralize security threats to the base and its personnel.

"Northern Viking is really important for our cooperation in the high north seas and to our country in defense of law enforcement scenarios," said Lt. Ásgeir R. Gudjonsson, the Icelandic coast guard improvised explosive device disposal specialist. "It's good to have a go at actual events and the training is vital for us. We learned that [different EOD teams] differ a bit, but they're close – so we can work really well together."

The first week of the exercise also included air defense scenarios, coordinated shiphandling evolutions and

hydrographic and airfield surveys. Throughout the exercise, allied maritime forces practiced a variety of evolutions to enhance their cooperation and coordination in defending Iceland and the sea lines of communication in the Greenland, Iceland, United Kingdom (GIUK) gap.

Participants shifted their focus during the latter half of the exercise to the Marines of the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit and Royal Marine Commandos as they conducted multiple ship-to-shore operations, a natural progression in complexity of the overall exercise. Marines and Sailors from the USS Kearsarge Amphibious Ready Group and 22nd MEU participated in a tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel, simulated raids on illicit compounds and visit, board, search and seizure operations.

Northern Viking 22, led by the U.S. 6th Fleet as a maritime-focused event for the first time in decades, established a framework for future iterations of the Northern Viking exercise. As units and personnel depart Iceland for their own national taskings and future missions, the planning cycle for Northern Viking 24 is right around the corner. With lessons learned and invaluable training experiences and opportunities to look back on, exercise planners look forward to building on the successes of Northern Viking 22.

CMS: The Navy's Seven Operational Imperatives for This Decade



A Boeing unmanned MQ-25 aircraft is given operating directions on the flight deck aboard the aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77). Its initial operating capability as an aerial refueling tanker will extend the range, operational capability and power projection of the carrier air wing and carrier strike group. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Brandon Roberson*

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday laid out a 500-ship force earlier this year ahead of the current defense budget submission. The service has worked to balance between recapitalizing for a new, 2045 force structure, and what it needs for the so-called "fight tonight," approaching period of 2027-2030 when China may attempt reunification with Taiwan by force.

Grouping these by operational level of war problems can help the Navy prioritize between what it needs today in case of Chinese or additional Russian aggression now, and what the service needs as it moves toward its future force structure. These are not in a specific priority, but the final imperative

is the most vital.

1. Readiness of the existing force: Some experts would suggest that the only “ready” navy units are those currently deployed and those coming to relieve them. While not as exciting as new construction, the funding for regular scheduled overhaul and updating of current Navy ships, the training of their crews and their outfitting in terms of spare parts, fuel and above all ammunition is of vital importance. Only 30% of the total cost of any new ship is incurred in its building with a full 70% devoted to the upkeep and maintenance of the ship across its lifetime. Like a car that does not receive regular dealer service, a warship that does not undergo regular maintenance starts to decline in overall readiness. Paying these readiness bills on time ensures that the existing force is ready in the event of hostile action.
2. Logistics, logistics, logistics: The bogged-down Russian invasion of Ukraine again shows that amateurs do tactics and experts think about logistics. Current U.S. naval combat logistics and sealift forces are small, aged in years and designed around a “just in time, hub and spoke” delivery method that maximizes peacetime efficiency but is ill-suited to fleet-level combat. This is especially true in terms of the Navy’s “distributed maritime operations” doctrine that needs a distributed logistics force for resupply during extended combat operations. Rebuilding both combat logistics and sealift to include delivery “over the beach” of fuel and supplies to Marines must remain a top operational imperative.
3. Get the M/Q-25A in the air before 2025: The Navy and Marine Corps have made great strides in carrier air wing aircraft readiness since 2016, but the services must go the extra mile to further reduce the burden on the F/A-18 E/F force and extend the range of the carrier air

wing in general. Carrier aircraft have adopted “buddy tanking” for years to extend the range of strike aircraft in an increasingly dangerous Indo-Pacific menaced by People’s Republic of China missiles and aircraft. Getting the M/Q-25A drone tanker integrated into the airwing not only extends its strike range now but is a bridge to using the drone as a potential unmanned strike aircraft.

4. Scouting the bridge to unmanned futures: There is still uncertainty surrounding projected Navy unmanned systems. Congress does not seem fully convinced the Navy can make them work in combat, and many questions remain on the network connectivity and reliability of these platforms over extended periods of time at sea. However, one aspect of unmanned systems is proving itself in the here and now. Unmanned units employed as long-term distributive sensors are operating commercially with great success in measuring current, temperature and a host of other environmental factors. The U.S. Navy 5th Fleet, located in the Persian Gulf region, just completed a very successful experiment with an unmanned intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platforms called Task Force 59. TF 59’s unmanned units successfully operated over time and provided commanders with real-time information crucial to targeting opponent ships, submarine and aircraft. Naval tactics expert Capt. Wayne Hughes said being able to “attack effectively first” depended on effective scouting that found opponents without revealing one’s own force locations. Expendable unmanned scouting units can fulfill that function and serve as an operational bridge to further unmanned systems development.
5. Train to Fight: Perhaps a subset of the readiness and scouting imperatives, but it’s still vital to train to fight at expected levels of organization and chaos. Throughout much of the post-Cold War era individual Navy carrier strike or amphibious ready groups ventured alone

as deployed assets, secure in general U.S. sea control over wide areas of the world's oceans. The rise of the PRC's navy and the return of a revanchist Russia has ended that blanket level of security and U.S. naval forces will again have to fight for sea control before undertaking other missions. Training to fight at larger levels of organization such as the three-carrier battle force gets Sailors and Marines used to operating in these larger formations. As Russia's ground force mishaps in Ukraine have shown, if forces do not train and get used to fighting in larger formations it is unlikely that they will perform well in combat in those groupings.

6. Stay ahead in the undersea environment: Many documents extol the U.S. lead in undersea systems, especially in its nuclear attack and ballistic missile submarine designs. Since the days of the Walker Spy ring in the 1980s, however, the Russians and others have sought to duplicate or steal elements of the U.S. undersea advantage. No such advantage can be taken for granted as well and the U.S. Navy should seek to expand its undersea capabilities with supporting unmanned systems and forward-deployed infrastructure to support undersea operations. The Navy had 11 deployable submarine tenders at the end of the Cold War and today has only two. If fleet operations (including submarines) must be distributive, then submarine maintenance and logistics, especially weapons reloading, should be equally dispersed as needed. The only way to get there is by adding more submarine tenders to the fleet.
7. It's time to take the maritime strategy "off the shelf." Back in June 1990 during his confirmation hearings before the Senate Armed Services Committee as Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Frank Kelso was asked by Sen. John McCain what the Navy intended to do with its maritime strategy to globally fight the Soviet Union now that the communist state appeared in full retreat and

the Cold War over. Kelso responded, "Military strategy needs a specific enemy," and with the end of the Cold War, "the issues before us seem to be ones of naval policy and not strategy." Kelso further stated the maritime strategy for combatting a global great power opponent should be "put on the shelf" and could be "taken down" when needed if another global opponent reappeared. The U.S. now faces two nuclear-armed great power opponents and it's time to pull a maritime strategy down from Kelso's shelf. It will not be the same as its 1980s predecessor, but only a service-generated blueprint that serves as a guide, and not a directive for combatant commanders to follow can integrate all these operational imperatives in a single, authoritative source. A strategy that gives Congress and the American people an idea of what their Navy does in peace and what it could do in war is vital to securing public support for the other operational imperatives. It should speak in terms of numbers of ships, maps, geographic lines of effort that show what the Navy might do, which allies and partners might join the U.S. war effort, and suggest what goals the U.S. would pursue in great power war to have a definition of how such a conflict might end. Open-ended commitments in the Middle East over decades have soured the public on any extensive military operations and telling them "how wars end" is just as important as how the military means to wage them.

All these operational imperatives are important, but the strategy is perhaps the most valuable as it ties together all of the imperatives in a single package for both Congress, American citizens and the industrial organizations that can bring the other imperatives to life.